



# Employee Engagement, Teambuilding & Motivating Activities

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TEMPLATES FOR SUPERVISOR SUCCESS TOOLKIT

Organizational Development & Training, Office of HR  
| UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS RIO GRANDE VALLEY

# COMMON GROUND

Form equal sized teams of 3-6 players. Give each team a sheet of paper and a pencil. Tell teams their challenge is to list everything they can think of that all team members have in common.

For example, attending the same school, prefer the same kind of music, have the same brand of tennis shoes. The only rule is they cannot list similar body parts, i.e. "We all have two arms, etc."

Tell teams they have three minutes to create their lists, so they need to work quickly. To add to the excitement, tell the teams when they have 1 minute left, thirty seconds, and so forth.

When time is up, find out which team has the longest list and ask them to read the similarities they listed. Then ask teams whose similarities have not already been read aloud to read some of theirs.

## **Discussion:**

- How easy was it to discover something in common with another group member?
- How can similarities draw us closer together?
- How can our differences draw us closer together?

*Adapted from: Keefer, Mikal (Compiler). All-Star Games from All-Star Youth Leaders. 1998. Loveland, Colorado: Group Publishing, Inc.*

## FRIDAY FAVORITE T-SHIRT

Ask attendees to bring (or wear) their favorite T-shirt on Friday. Once all participants have arrived, ask each person to show the shirt to the group and explain how the T-shirt best resembles their personality or reveals something unique about their experiences.

Adapted from <http://www.topten.org/content/tt.AU20.htm> by Janice LaVore, Director of Customer Care for Fortune 100 Company.

Adapted from: [http://www.funattic.com/game\\_icebreaker.htm](http://www.funattic.com/game_icebreaker.htm). Lindsay Scheel, Fun-Attic, Inc.

# SUPER STAR WALL

Create a “Super Star Wall” to post outstanding efforts

Snap photos of your employee’s accomplishments or take candid shots of their hard work. Celebrate their contributions by creating a collage showcasing their outstanding efforts.



Adapted from 18 creative and sincere employee appreciation ideas,  
<https://www.tinypulse.com/blog/sk-18-creative-employee-recognition-ideas> by *Sabrina Son*

# GET TO KNOW EACH OTHER BETTER!



Encourage everyone to stand in a circle and get to know each other better by sharing the following prompts.

My Hobby

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Things I like about UTRGV

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My best memory

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# TALLEST TOWER

**Objective:** For everyone on a team to contribute to the completion of a challenging task.

**Materials:** Varied (see idea list below)

**Description:** Prior to the activity, gather supplies together that can be used to make a tall tower but are not conventional things to build with, such as:

- Paper (and nothing else)
- Raw spaghetti and marshmallows
- Gumdrops and toothpicks
- Drinking straws and paper clips
- Drinking straws and tape
- Paper cups and a pack of chewing gum
- String, paper cups, and drinking straws
- Cookies

Break the group into teams of two to six members each. Give each group a pile of the supplies you have gathered and challenge them to build the tallest tower they can using only the supplies given to them. Give the group a time limit. At the end of the allotted time, ask the groups to show their creative to the rest of the group.

**Variation:** Everyone can only use one hand when building the structure.

Adapted from: Team-Building Activities for Every Group by Alanna Jones, 1999.

# MAGAZINE STORY

**Objective:** Visualize future success, motivate team members and encourage them to think big

In this activity, each team has to create an imaginary magazine cover story about a successful project or business achievement. They have to get the right images, come up with headlines, formulate quotes, etc. A great exercise in creativity that can also inspire your team to think bigger.

## How to play

1. The goal of this game is simple: get players to create a magazine cover story about your department or project (choose either). The players don't have to write the complete story; they only have to write the headlines and create images, quotes and sidebars.
2. Divide participants into teams of 3-6 players. Give them the markers, pens, and anything else they'll need to create a fictional magazine cover.
3. Create several templates for different elements of the magazine story. This should include: a) magazine cover, b) cover story headline, c) quotes from leaders and team members, d) sidebars about project highlights, and e) images.
4. Distribute these templates to each team. Ask them to create a magazine story, filling in each template and focusing on the project or business.
5. Choose the best magazine cover.

## Strategy

Seeing your project or business' success featured in a magazine is the high-point of any organization. This creative exercise helps your team members think big and visualize their future success. It can also be a powerful motivational tool.

Adapted from 31 Team Building Activities Your Team Will Actually Love, <https://www.workamajig.com/blog/team-building-activities> by Esther Cohen

# OFFICE TRIVIA

Sometimes, you need a quick activity to break the ice and get people involved in an event or meeting. Asking relevant "trivia" questions about your workplace works well in such situations.

**Objective:** Get people engaged and improve team bonding

## How to play

1. Come up with a list of trivia questions related to your place of work. Questions like "What does the poster in the breakroom say?", "How many people named 'John' work in the facilities and planning department?", "What was the purpose of today's meeting?", "Whose office has white tiles?" etc.
2. Write all questions and their answers on index cards.
3. Ask questions to the whole group and solicit answers out loud.
4. The participant who gets the most answers right wins at the end.

**Optional:** To make it more competitive, consider dividing participants into teams and adding 'buzzers' for each question.

## Strategy

Your workplace is the one thing common to all members of the team. The objects and people in your office tie your team together. A game like this is not only fun and easy to run, but also highlights the things common to everyone in the room, improving team bonding.

Adapted from 31 Team Building Activities Your Team Will Actually Love,  
<https://www.workamajig.com/blog/team-building-activities> by Esther Cohen



# NAME POEM AFFIRMATIONS

Pass out the worksheet on the following page to each group member. Have the group member write the letters of his/her name in the boxes to the left. After each person has written his name, have the group members pass their papers to the person on their right. The task for the person receiving the paper is to write a positive trait poem about the person. Each line will begin with the letters of their name. Allow 10-15 minutes for this activity. Have a few group members volunteer to read the name poem they created for their neighbors. Poems are finally presented to the person they are about.

## NAME POEM AFFIRMATIONS

<input type="text"/>	_____
<input type="text"/>	_____
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<input type="text"/>	_____
<input type="text"/>	_____

Source: Anonymous.

## BACK-TO-BACK DRAWING

This fast, fun activity is a quick take on Pictionary. You can do it outdoors or indoors, though the physical nature of this activity makes it more suitable for relaxed outdoors environments. Use it as an interlude between longer activities or at the very start of the event to get people in a relaxed state.

**Objective:** Improve communication skills

### How to play

1. Head to your favorite stock photography site and print a number of vector shapes on separate sheets of paper. These can be shapes of signs, objects, or even abstract shapes. Think "Statue of Liberty", "Formula 1 car", etc.
2. Divide participants into teams of two people each. Make them sit back-to-back.
3. Team Member A gets a pen and a sheet of paper. Team Member B is given one of the printed shapes.
4. The objective of the game is for the Team Member A to draw the shape using only verbal instructions from Team Member B. B cannot state what the object is; he/she can only describe its uses or give instructions on how to draw it.
5. Give each team 2 minutes to draw the shape.
6. Teams that get the most shapes right win.

### Strategy

This game focuses on communication skills - giving and listening to instructions. At the end of each game, evaluate what went wrong, what went right while communicating. This is not only great for getting people involved, but it can also highlight flaws in how your team members communicate verbally.

Adapted from 31 Team Building Activities Your Team Will Actually Love, <https://www.workamajig.com/blog/team-building-activities> by Esther Cohen

## ROTATING TROPHY

Find a fun trophy, stuffed animal, or figurine that you can pass around the office. Give it to an employee who has exemplified one of your organizational values, and let them keep it on their desk for a week. Come the next week, let that employee hand it off to one of their peers who have done the same.



## PROJECT PLAN



Let employees pick out an upcoming special project to work on. It shows that you trust them to keep accountable for their responsibilities. It can also serve as a professional development opportunity where workers get to try new things.

Adapted from 18 creative and sincere employee appreciation ideas,  
<https://www.tinypulse.com/blog/sk-18-creative-employee-recognition-ideas> by *Sabrina Son*

## THANK-YOU BINGO

Take a minute to reflect on your experience today and how it was enhanced by different members of your team. As you have each team member sign the box that reflects your appreciation of him or her, take time to provide the specifics regarding your appreciation.

Made you laugh	You got to know better	Showed you a different perspective	Surprised you	Is a good communicator
Gave you a hand	Kept an open mind	Is fun to be around	Works well with others	Deserves appreciation
Did something amazing	Provided encouragement	Reliable team player	Made an improvement	Is a great listener
Has positive energy	Took a risk	Inspires you	Has a great attitude	Has good leadership skills
Is creative	Played a different role	Is a good problem solver	Challenged you	Taught you something new

The big book of team motivating games by Mary Scannell and Edward E. Scannell

## THE WHOLE PICTURE

**The Objectives:** To brainstorm the qualities of a successful team, to consider the individuals contributions to the team and to create a takeaway from the program.



**Materials:** Flip-charts posters, markers

**How to play:** Have participants form groups of 4-7 members. Provide each group flip-chart and markers. Each group must create a drawing that depicts qualities of a successful team, including contributions that are necessary to bring out those qualities. For example, a group could draw a sun. In the middle of the sun, they could write all the qualities that make up a team (trust, communication etc.). On the rays coming out of the sun, they could write team members contributions (e.g. be a good listener, help each other, be reliable etc.)

After 15 minutes, have the groups present their posters to the whole team. Encourage them to share their insights about the traits and characteristics demonstrated throughout the activity. Ask them what steps they believe can be taken to incorporate those qualities and characteristics into their everyday work.



The big book of team motivating games by Mary Scannell and Edward E. Scannell

## SAY WHAT?



**Objectives:** To overcome barriers to communication and show how both the sender and the receiver play important roles in the communication process.

**How to play:** This quick activity demonstrates what it takes to be understood. Divide the group into three teams, and line them up in three parallel lines (larger groups can be divided into smaller three-team groups). The object of the game is for the team on one side to try to get a message to the team on the other side, while the team in the middle tries to drown out the message in any way they can.

- Team 1 is the message sender
- Team 2 is the message receiver
- Team 3 provides distraction.

Give teams a few minutes to strategize before beginning. The message sending team will also need time to come up with a message to send (at least three sentences in length)

Play enough rounds so that each team can play each role.

### Discussion Questions:

1. How did you get your message across?
2. What did the message senders do to ensure you received the correct message?
3. Did your strategy change during the activity? In what way?
4. How many different ways were used to communicate messages?
5. Which ways were most effective? Why?
6. What are some reasons our messages get “drowned out” in the workplace? What can we do to prevent that from happening?

## Other ideas:

### Employee Team Building Booklet

- Create a "Super Star Wall" to post outstanding efforts
- Break Time Bingo
- Kahoot Trivia – Workplace related questions
- Gallery Walks
- Appreciation Graffiti (all employees can add to the positive artwork)
- Gratitude Tree
- Meeting ideas, Ice Breakers and give away for great ideas shared and implemented
- Show & Tell
- Sharing pet pictures
- Map your Travels
- Thank you cards for employees or teams
- Thank you posters on bulletin boards
- Wellness Treat Mixers – Potlucks Healthy Snacks
- Holiday Recipe Share/ Foods from Around the World : Cookies; Meals
- Wellness Walking Counting Steps Contests
- Treasure Hunts/Hidden Word Games
- Stretch Away Stress Activity

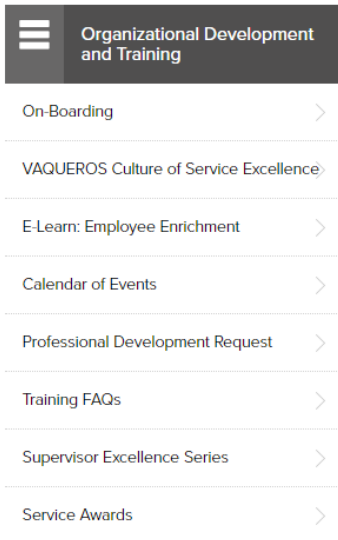
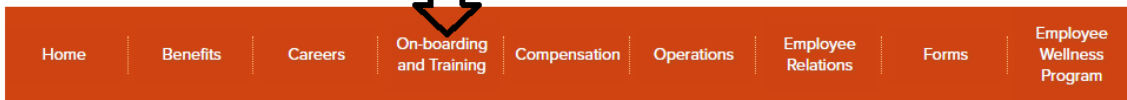
For wellness related activities and resources, HR Wellness Coordinator may provide assistance.

# For More Information Contact

## Organizational Development & Training

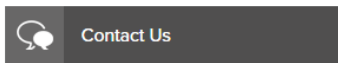
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Organizational Development and Training

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